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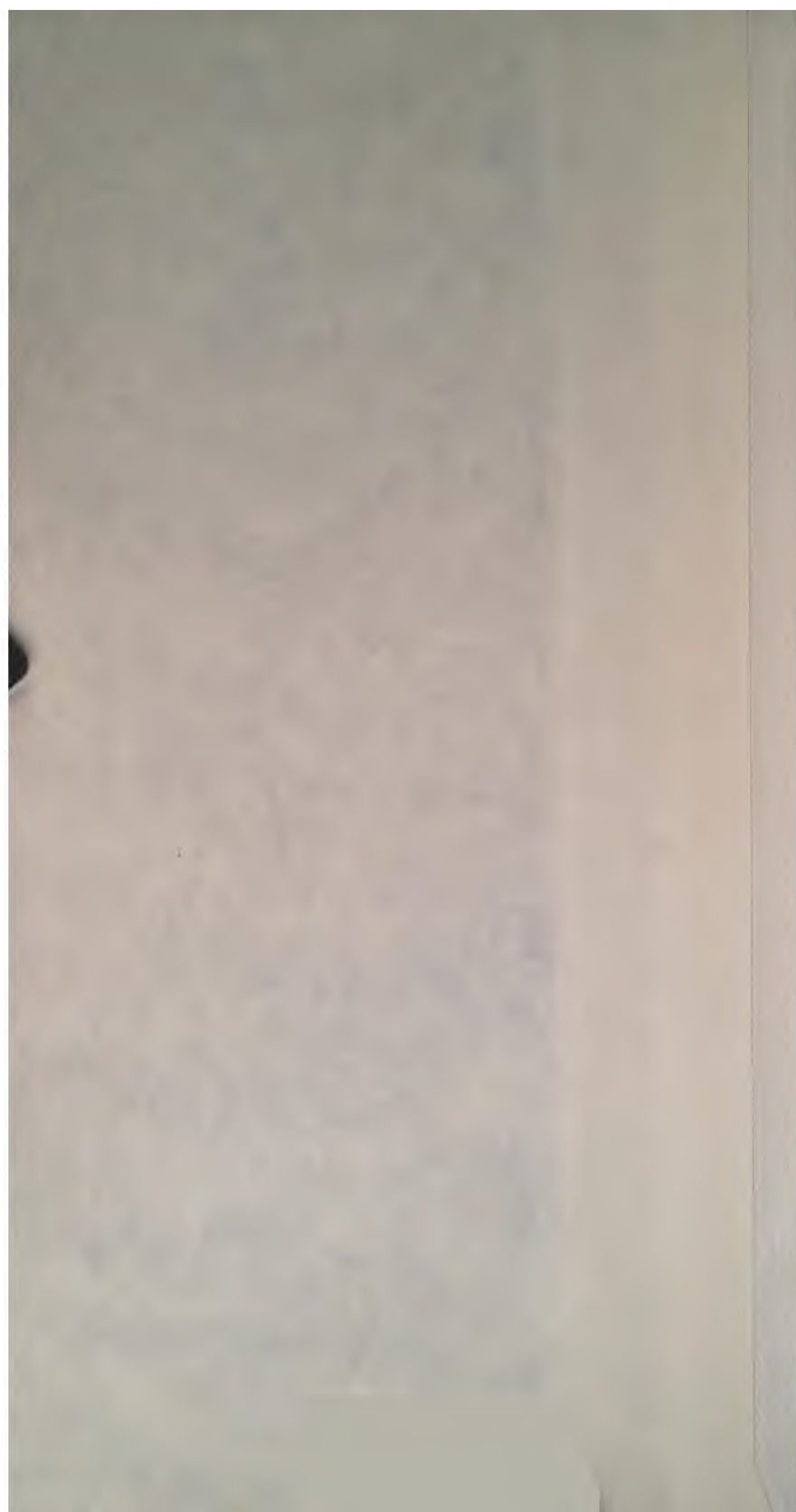
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THE SCEPTIC.

STANZAS.

LONDON:
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THE SCEPTIC,

A POEM.

STANZAS

TO THE

MEMORY OF THE LATE KING.

Public Domain

BY MRS. HEMANS.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE-STREET.

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(H. C. 1857.)

THE
S C E P T I C.

“ Leur raison, qu'ils prennent pour guide, ne présente à leur esprit que des conjectures et des embarras ; les absurdités où ils tombent en niant la Religion deviennent plus insoutenables que les vérités dont la hauteur les étonne ; et pour ne vouloir pas croire des mystères incompréhensibles, ils suivent l'une après l'autre d'incompréhensibles erreurs.”

Bossuet, Oraisons funébres.

THE
SCEPTIC.

WHEN the young Eagle, with exulting eye,
Has learn'd to dare the splendor of the sky,
And leave the Alps beneath him in his course,
To bathe his crest in morn's empyreal source,
Will his free wing, from that majestic height,
Descend to follow some wild meteor's light,
Which far below, with evanescent fire,
Shines to delude, and dazzles to expire?

No! still thro' clouds he wins his upward way,
And proudly claims his heritage of day!
—And shall the spirit, on whose ardent gaze,
The day-spring from on high hath pour'd its blaze,

Turn from that pure effulgence, to the beam
Of earth-born light, that sheds a treacherous gleam,
Luring the wanderer, from the star of faith,
To the deep valley of the shades of death?
What bright exchange, what treasure shall be given,
For the high birth-right of its hope in Heaven?
If lost the gem which empires could not buy,
What yet remains?—a dark eternity!

Is earth still Eden?—might a Seraph guest,
Still, midst its chosen bowers delighted rest?
Is all so cloudless and so calm below,
We seek no fairer scenes than *life* can show?
That the cold Sceptic, in his pride elate,
Rejects the promise of a brighter state,
And leaves the rock, no tempest shall displace,
To rear his dwelling on the quicksand's base?

Votary of doubt! then join the festal throng,
Bask in the sunbeam, listen to the song,

Spread the rich board, and fill the wine-cup high,
And bind the wreath ere yet the roses die !
'Tis well, thine eye is yet undimm'd by time,
And thy heart bounds, exulting in its prime ;
Smile then unmoved at Wisdom's warning voice,
And, in the glory of thy strength, rejoice !

But life hath sterner tasks; e'en youth's brief hours
Survive the beauty of their loveliest flowers ;
The founts of joy, where pilgrims rest from toil,
Are few and distant on the desert soil ;
The soul's pure flame the breath of storms must fan,
And pain and sorrow claim their nursling—Man !
Earth's noblest sons the bitter cup have shared—
Proud child of reason! how art *thou* prepared ?
When years, with silent might, thy frame have bow'd,
And o'er thy spirit cast their wintry cloud,
Will Memory soothe thee on thy bed of pain,
With the bright images of pleasure's train ?

Yes ! as the sight of some far distant shore,
Whose well-known scenes his foot shall tread no more,
Would cheer the seaman, by the eddying wave
Drawn, vainly struggling, to th' unfathom'd grave !
Shall Hope, the faithful cherub, hear thy call,
She, who like heaven's own sunbeam, smiles for all ?
Will *she* speak comfort ?—Thou hast shorn her plume,
That might have raised thee far above the tomb,
And hush'd the only voice whose angel tone
Soothes when all melodies of joy are flown !

For she was born beyond the stars to soar,
And kindling at the source of life, adore ;
Thou couldst not, mortal ! rivet to the earth
Her eye, whose beam is of celestial birth ;
She dwells with those who leave her pinion free,
And sheds the dews of heaven on all but thee.

Yet few there are, so lonely, so bereft,
But some true heart, that beats to theirs, is left,

And, haply, one whose strong affection's power
Unchanged may triumph thro' misfortune's hour,
Still with fond care supports thy languid head,
And keeps unwearied vigils by thy bed.

But thou! whose thoughts have no blest home above,
Captive of earth! and canst thou dare to *love*?
To nurse such feelings as delight to rest,
Within that hallow'd shrine—a parent's breast,
To fix each hope, concentrate every tie,
On one frail idol,—destined but to die,
Yet mock the faith that points to worlds of light,
Where sever'd souls, made perfect, re-unite?
Then tremble! cling to every passing joy,
Twined with the life a moment may destroy!
If there be sorrow in a parting tear,
Still let "*for ever*" vibrate on thine ear!
If some bright hour on rapture's wing hath flown,
Find more than anguish in the thought—'tis gone!

Go! to a voice such magic influence give,
Thou canst not lose its melody, and live;
And make an eye the lode-star of thy soul,
And let a glance the springs of thought control;
Gaze on a mortal form with fond delight,
Till the fair vision mingles with thy sight;
There seek thy blessings, there repose thy trust,
Lean on the willow, idolize the dust!
Then, when thy treasure best repays thy care,
Think on that dread "*for ever*"—and despair!

And oh! no strange, unwonted storm there needs,
To wreck at once thy fragile ark of reeds.
Watch well its course—explore with anxious eye
Each little cloud that floats along the sky—
Is the blue canopy serenely fair?
Yet may the thunderbolt unseen be there,
And the bark sink, when peace and sunshine sleep
On the smooth bosom of the waveless deep!

Yes! ere a sound, a sign, announce thy fate,
May the blow fall which makes thee desolate!
Not always heaven's destroying angel shrouds
His awful form in tempests and in clouds;
He fills the summer-air with latent power,
He hides his venom in the scented flower,
He steals upon thee in the Zephyr's breath,
And festal garlands veil the shafts of death!

Where art thou *then*, who thus didst rashly cast
Thine all upon the mercy of the blast,
And vainly hope the tree of life to find
Rooted in sands that flit before the wind?
Is not that earth thy spirit loved so well,
It wish'd not in a brighter sphere to dwell,
Become a desert *now*, a vale of gloom,
O'ershadow'd with the midnight of the tomb?
Where shalt thou turn?—it is not thine to raise
To yon pure heaven thy calm confiding gaze,

No gleam reflected from that realm of rest
Steals on the darkness of thy troubled breast,
Not for thine eye shall Faith divinely shed
Her glory round the image of the dead ;
And if, when slumber's lonely couch is prest,
The form departed be thy spirit's guest,
It bears no light from purer worlds to this ;
Thy future lends not e'en a dream of bliss.

But who shall dare the Gate of Life to close,
Or say, *thus far* the stream of mercy flows ?
That fount unseal'd, whose boundless waves embrace
Each distant isle, and visit every race,
Pours from the Throne of God its current free,
Nor yet denies th' immortal draught to thee.
Oh ! while the doom impends, not yet decreed,
While yet th' Atoner hath not ceased to plead,
While still, suspended by a single hair,
The sharp bright sword hangs quivering in the air,

Bow down thy heart to Him, who will not break
The bruised reed ; e'en yet, awake, awake !
Patient, because Eternal, ⁽¹⁾ He may hear
Thy prayer of agony with pitying ear,
And send his chastening spirit from above,
O'er the deep chaos of thy soul to move.

But seek thou mercy thro' His name alone,
To whose unequall'd sorrows none was shown.
Thro' Him, who here in mortal garb abode,
As man to suffer, and to heal as God ;
And, born the sons of utmost time to bless,
Endured all scorn, and aided all distress.

Call thou on Him—for He, in human form,
Hath walk'd the waves of Life, and still'd the storm.
He, when her hour of lingering grace was past,
O'er Salem wept, relenting to the last,
Wept with such tears as Judah's monarch pour'd
O'er his lost child, ungrateful, yet deplored ;

And, offering guiltless blood that guilt might live,
Taught from his Cross the lesson—to forgive !

Call thou on Him—his prayer e'en then arose,
Breathed in unpitied anguish, for his foes.
And haste !—ere bursts the lightning from on high,
Fly to the City of thy Refuge, fly ! ⁽²⁾
So shall th' Avenger turn his steps away,
And sheath his falchion, baffled of its prey.

Yet must long days roll on, ere peace shall brood,
As the soft Halcyon, o'er thy heart subdued ;
Ere yet the dove of Heaven descend, to shed
Inspiring influence o'er thy fallen head.
—He, who hath pined in dungeons, midst the shade
Of such deep night as man for man hath made,
Thro' lingering years ; if call'd at length to be,
Once more, by nature's boundless charter, free,
Shrinks feebly back, the blaze of noon to shun,
Fainting at day, and blasted by the sun !

Thus, when the captive soul hath long remain'd
In its own dread abyss of darkness chain'd,
If the Deliverer, in his might, at last,
Its fetters, born of earth, to earth should cast,
The beam of truth o'erpowers its dazzled sight,
Trembling it sinks, and finds no joy in light.
But this will pass away—that spark of mind,
Within thy frame unquenchably enshrined,
Shall live to triumph in its bright'ning ray,
Born to be foster'd with ethereal day.
Then wilt thou bless the hour, when o'er thee pass'd,
On wing of flame, the purifying blast,
And sorrow's voice, thro' paths before untrod,
Like Sinai's trumpet, call'd thee to thy God!

But hop'st thou, in thy panoply of pride,
Heaven's messenger, affliction, to deride?
In thine own strength unaided to defy,
With Stoic smile, the arrows of the sky?

Torn by the vulture, fetter'd to the rock,
Still, Demigod ! the tempest wilt thou mock ? //

Alas ! the tower that crests the mountain's brow
A thousand years may awe the vale below,
Yet not the less be shatter'd on its height,
By one dread moment of the earthquake's might !
A thousand pangs thy bosom may have borne,
In silent fortitude, or haughty scorn,
Till comes the one, the master-anguish, sent
To break the mighty heart that ne'er was bent.

Oh ! what is nature's strength ? the vacant eye,
By mind deserted, hath a dread reply !
The wild delirious laughter of despair,
The mirth of frenzy—seek an answer there !
Turn not away, tho' pity's cheek grow pale,
Close not thine ear against their awful tale.
They tell thee, reason, wandering from the ray
Of Faith, the blazing pillar of her way,

In the mid-darkness of the stormy wave,
Forsook the struggling soul she could not save !
Weep not, sad moralist ! o'er desert plains,
Strew'd with the wrecks of grandeur—mouldering fanes,
Arches of triumph, long with weeds o'ergrown,
And regal cities, now the serpent's own :
Earth has more awful ruins—one lost mind,
Whose star is quench'd, hath lessons for mankind,
Of deeper import than each prostrate dome,
Mingling its marble with the dust of Rome.

But who with eye unshrinking shall explore
That waste, illumed by reason's beam no more ?
Who pierce the deep, mysterious clouds that roll
Around the shatter'd temple of the soul,
Curtain'd with midnight ?—low its columns lie,
And dark the chambers of its imag'ry,⁽³⁾
Sunk are its idols now—and God alone
May rear the fabric, by their fall o'erthrown !

Yet, from its inmost shrine, by storms laid bare,
Is heard an oracle that cries—"Beware!
Child of the dust! but ransom'd of the skies!
One breath of Heaven—and thus thy glory dies!
Haste, ere the hour of doom, draw nigh to Him
Who dwells above between the cherubim!"

Spirit dethroned! and check'd in mid career,
Son of the morning! exiled from thy sphere,
Tell us thy tale!—Perchance thy race was run
With science, in the chariot of the sun;
Free as the winds the paths of space to sweep,
Traverse the untrodden kingdoms of the deep,
And search the laws that Nature's springs control,
There tracing all—save Him who guides the whole!

Haply thine eye its ardent glance had cast
Thro' the dim shades, the portals of the past;
By the bright lamp of thought thy care had fed
From the far beacon-lights of ages fled,

The depths of time exploring, to retrace
The glorious march of many a vanish'd race.

Or did thy power pervade the living lyre,
Till its deep chords became instinct with fire,
Silenced all meaner notes, and swell'd on high,
Full and alone, their mighty harmony,
While woke each passion from its cell profound,
And nations started at th' electric sound?

Lord of th' Ascendant! what avails it now,
Tho' bright the laurels waved upon thy brow?
What, tho' thy name, thro' distant empires heard,
Bade the heart bound, as doth a battle-word?
Was it for *this* thy still unwearied eye
Kept vigil with the watch-fires of the sky,
To make the secrets of all ages thine,
And commune with majestic thoughts that shine
O'er Time's long shadowy pathway?—hath thy mind

Sever'd its lone dominions from mankind,
For *this* to woo their homage?—Thou hast sought
All, save the wisdom with salvation fraught,
Won every wreath—but that which will not die,
Nor aught neglected—save eternity!

And did all fail thee, in the hour of wrath,
When burst th' o'erwhelming vials on thy path?
Could not the voice of Fame inspire thee then,
O spirit! scepter'd by the sons of men,
With an Immortal's courage, to sustain
The transient agonies of earthly pain?

—One, one there was, all-powerful to have saved,
When the loud fury of the billow raved;
But Him thou knew'st not—and the light he lent
Hath vanish'd from its ruin'd tenement,
But left thee breathing, moving, lingering yet,
A thing we shrink from—vainly to forget!

—Lift the dread veil no further—hide, oh! hide
The bleeding form, the couch of suicide!
The dagger, grasp'd in death—the brow, the eye,
Lifeless, yet stamp'd with rage and agony;
The soul's dark traces left in many a line
Graved on *his* mien, who died,—“ and made no sign!”
Approach not, gaze not—lest thy fevered brain
Too deep that image of despair retain;
Angels of slumber! o'er the midnight hour,
Let not such visions claim unhallow'd power,
Lest the mind sink with terror, and above
See but th' Avenger's arm, forget th'Atoner's love!

O Thou! th' unseen, th' all-seeing!—Thou whose ways
Mantled with darkness, mock all finite gaze,
Before whose eyes the creatures of Thy hand,
Seraph and man, alike in weakness stand,
And countless ages, trampling into clay
Earth's empires on their march, are but a day;

Father of worlds unknown, unnumber'd !—Thou,
With whom all time is one eternal *now*,
Who know'st no past, nor future—Thou whose breath
Goes forth, and bears to myriads, life or death !
Look on us, guide us !—wanderers of a sea
Wild and obscure, what are we, reft of Thee ?
A thousand rocks, deep-hid, elude our sight,
A star may set—and we are lost in night ;
A breeze may waft us to the whirlpool's brink,
A treach'rous song allure us—and we sink !

Oh ! by *His* love, who, veiling Godhead's light,
To moments circumscribed the Infinite,
And Heaven and Earth disdain'd not to ally
By that dread union—Man with Deity ;
Immortal tears o'er mortal woes who shed,
And, ere he raised them, wept above the dead ;
Save, or we perish !—let Thy word control
The earthquakes of that universe—the soul ;

Pervade the depths of passion—speak once more
The mighty mandate, guard of every shore,
“ Here shall thy waves be staid ”——in grief, in pain,
The fearful poise of reason’s sphere maintain,
Thou, by whom suns are balanced !—thus secure
In Thee shall Faith and Fortitude endure ;
Conscious of Thee, unfaltering shall the just
Look upward still, in high and holy trust,
And, by affliction guided to Thy shrine,
The first, last thought of suffering hearts be Thine.

And oh ! be near, when, clothed with conquering power,
The King of Terrors claims his own dread hour :
When, on the edge of that unknown abyss,
Which darkly parts us from the realm of bliss,
Awe-struck alike the timid and the brave,
Alike subdued the monarch and the slave,
Must drink the cup of trembling ⁽⁴⁾—when we see
Nought in the universe but death and Thee,

Forsake us not;—if still, when life was young,
Faith to Thy bosom, as her home, hath sprung,
If Hope's retreat hath been, through all the past,
The shadow by the Rock of Ages cast,
Father, forsake us not!—when tortures urge
The shrinking soul to that mysterious verge,
When from Thy justice to Thy love we fly,
On Nature's conflict look with pitying eye,
Bid the strong wind, the fire, the earthquake cease,
Come in the still small voice, and whisper—peace!⁽⁵⁾

For oh! 'tis awful—He that hath beheld
The parting spirit, by its fears repell'd,
Cling in weak terror to its earthly chain,
And from the dizzy brink recoil, in vain;
He that hath seen the last convulsive throes
Dissolve the union form'd and closed in woe,
Well knows, that hour is awful.—In the pride
Of youth and health, by sufferings yet untried,

We talk of Death, as something, which 'twere sweet
In Glory's arms exultingly to meet,
A closing triumph, a majestic scene,
Where gazing nations watch the hero's mien,
As, undismay'd amidst the tears of all,
He folds his mantle, regally to fall!

Hush, fond enthusiast!—still, obscure, and lone,
Yet not less terrible because unknown,
Is the last hour of thousands—they retire
From life's throng'd path, unnoticed to expire,
As the light leaf, whose fall to ruin bears
Some trembling insect's little world of cares,
Descends in silence—while around waves on
The mighty forest, reckless what is gone!
Such is man's doom—and, ere an hour be flown,
—Start not, thou trifler!—such may be thine own.

But as life's current in its ebb draws near
The shadowy gulf, there wakes a thought of fear,

A thrilling thought, which, haply mock'd before,
We fain would stifle—but it sleeps no more !
There are, who fly its murmurs midst the throng,
That join the masque of revelry and song,
Yet still Death's image, by its power restored,
Frowns midst the roses of the festal board,
And, when deep shades o'er earth and ocean brood,
And the heart owns the might of solitude,
Is its low whisper heard ?—a note profound,
But wild and startling as the trumpet-sound,
That bursts, with sudden blast, the dead repose
Of some proud city, storm'd by midnight foes !

Oh ! vainly reason's scornful voice would prove
That life hath nought to claim such lingering love,
And ask, if e'er the captive, half unchain'd,
Clung to the links which yet his step restrain'd ?
In vain philosophy, with tranquil pride,
Would mock the feelings she perchance can hide,

Call up the countless armies of the dead,
Point to the pathway beaten by their tread,
And say—⁴ What wouldst thou? Shall the fix'd decree,
Made for creation, be revers'd for *thee*?"
—Poor, feeble aid!—proud Stoic! ask not why,
It is enough, that nature shrinks to die!
Enough, *that* horror, which thy words upbraid,
Is her dread penalty, and must be paid!
—Search thy deep wisdom, solve the scarce defined
And mystic questions of the parting mind,
Half check'd, half utter'd—tell her, what shall burst
In whelming grandeur, on her vision first,
When freed from mortal films?—what viewless world
Shall first receive her wing, but half unfurl'd?
What awful and unbodied beings guide
Her timid flight thro' regions yet untried?
Say, if at once, her final doom to hear,
Before her God the trembler must appear,
Or wait that day of terror, when the sea
Shall yield its hidden dead, and heaven and earth shall flee?

Hast thou no answer?—then deride no more
The thoughts that shrink, yet cease not to explore
Th' unknown, th' unseen, the future—tho' the heart,
As at unearthly sounds, before them start,
Tho' the frame shudder, and the spirit sigh,
They have their source in immortality!
Whence, then, shall strength, which reason's aid denies,
An equal to the mortal conflict rise?
When, on the swift pale horse, whose lightning pace,
Where'er we fly, still wins the dreadful race,
The mighty rider comes—oh! whence shall aid
Be drawn, to meet his rushing, undismay'd?
—Whence, but from thee, Messiah!—thou hast drain'd
The bitter cup, till not the dregs remain'd;
To thee the struggle and the pang were known,
The mystic horror—all became thine own!

But did no hand celestial succour bring,
Till scorn and anguish haply lost their sting?

Came not th' Archangel, in the final hour,
To arm thee with invulnerable power?
No, Son of God! upon thy sacred head,
The shafts of wrath their tenfold fury shed,
From man averted—and thy path on high
Pass'd thro' the strait of fiercest agony;
For thus th' Eternal, with propitious eyes,
Received the last, th' almighty sacrifice!

But wake! be glad, ye nations! from the tomb,
Is won the vict'ry, and is fled the gloom!
The vale of death in conquest hath been trod,
Break forth in joy, ye ransom'd! saith your God!
Swell ye the raptures of the song afar,
And hail with harps your bright and morning star.

He rose! the everlasting gates of day
Received the King of Glory on his way!
The hope, the comforter of those who wept,
And the first-fruits of them, in Him that slept.

He rose, he triumph'd! he will yet sustain
Frail nature sinking in the strife of pain.
Aided by Him, around the martyr's frame
When fiercely blazed a living shroud of flame,
Hath the firm soul exulted, and the voice
Raised the victorious hymn, and cried, Rejoice!
Aided by Him, tho' none the bed attend,
Where the lone sufferer dies without a friend,
He, whom the busy world shall miss no more
Than morn one dew-drop from her countless store,
Earth's most neglected child, with trusting heart,
Call'd to the hope of glory, shall depart!

And say, cold Sophist! if by thee bereft
Of that high hope, to misery what were left?
But for the vision of the days to be,
But for the Comforter, despised by thee,
Should we not wither at the Chastener's look,
Should we not sink beneath our God's rebuke,

When o'er our heads the desolating blast,
Fraught with inscrutable decrees, hath pass'd,
And the stern power who seeks the noblest prey,
Hath call'd our fairest and our best away?
Should we not madden, when our eyes behold
All that we loved in marble stillness cold,
No more responsive to our smile or sigh,
Fix'd—frozen—silent—all mortality?
But for the promise, all shall yet be well,
Would not the spirit in its pangs rebel,
Beneath such clouds as darken'd, when the hand
Of wrath lay heavy on our prostrate land,
And Thou, just lent thy gladden'd isles to bless,
Then snatch'd from earth with all thy loveliness,
With all a nation's blessings on thy head,
O England's flower! wert gather'd to the dead?
But Thou didst teach us. Thou to every heart,
Faith's lofty lesson didst thyself impart!
When fled the hope thro' all thy pangs which smiled,
When thy young bosom, o'er thy lifeless child,

Yearn'd with vain longing—still thy patient eye,
To its last light, beam'd holy constancy !
Torn from a lot in cloudless sunshine cast,
Amidst those agonies—thy first and last,
Thy pale lip, quivering with convulsive throes,
Breathed not a plaint—and settled in repose ;
While bow'd thy royal head to Him, whose power
Spoke in the fiat of that midnight hour,
Who from the brightest vision of a throne,
Love, glory, empire, claim'd thee for his own,
And spread such terror o'er the sea-girt coast,
As blasted Israel, when her Ark was lost !

“ It is the will of God !—yet, yet we hear
The words which closed thy beautiful career,
Yet should we mourn thee in thy blest abode,
But for that thought—“ It is the will of God !”
Who shall arraign th' Eternal's dark decree,
If not one murmur then escaped from thee ?

Oh! still, tho' vanishing without a trace,
Thou hast not left one scion of thy race,
Still may thy memory bloom our vales among,
Hallow'd by freedom, and enshrined in song!
Still may thy pure, majestic spirit dwell,
Bright on the isles which loved thy name so well,
E'en as an angel, with presiding care,
To wake and guard thine own high virtues there.

For lo! the hour when storm-presaging skies
Call on the watchers of the land to rise,
To set the sign of fire on every height,⁽⁶⁾
And o'er the mountains rear, with patriot might,
Prepared, if summon'd, in its cause to die,
The banner of our faith, the Cross of victory!

By this hath England conquer'd—field and flood
Have own'd her sovereignty—alone she stood,
When chains o'er all the scepter'd earth were thrown,
In high and holy singleness, alone,

But mighty in her God—and shall she now
Forget before th' Omnipotent to bow ?
From the bright fountain of her glory turn,
Or bid strange fire upon his altars burn ?
No ! sever'd land, midst rocks and billows rude,
Throned in thy majesty of solitude,
Still in the deep asylum of thy breast
Shall the pure elements of greatness rest,
Virtue and faith, the tutelary powers,
Thy hearths that hallow, and defend thy towers !

Still, where thy hamlet-vales, O chosen isle !
In the soft beauty of their verdure smile,
Where yew and elm o'ershade the lowly fanes,
That guard the peasant's records and remains,
May the blest echoes of the Sabbath-bell
Sweet on the quiet of the woodlands swell,
And from each cottage-dwelling of thy glades,
When starlight glimmers through the deepening shades,

Devotion's voice in choral hymns arise,
And bear the Land's warm incense to the skies.

There may the mother, as with anxious joy
To Heaven her lessons consecrate her boy,
Teach his young accents still th' immortal lays
Of Zion's bards, in inspiration's days,
When Angels, whispering thro' the cedar's shade,
Prophetic tones to Judah's harp convey'd;
And as, her soul all glistening in her eyes,
She bids the prayer of infancy arise,
Tell of His name, who left his Throne on high,
Earth's lowliest lot to bear and sanctify,
His love divine, by keenest anguish tried,
And fondly say—"My child, for thee He died!"

NOTES.

Note 1, page 11, line 3.

Patient, because Eternal.

“He is patient, because He is eternal.”

St. Augustine.

Note 2, page 12, line 6.

Fly to the City of thy Refuge, fly!

Then ye shall appoint you cities, to be cities of refuge for you; that the slayer may flee thither which killeth any person at unawares.—And they shall be unto you cities of refuge from the avenger.—Numbers, chap. 35.

Note 3, page 15, line 16.

And dark the chambers of its imag'ry.

Every man in the chambers of his imagery.

Ezekiel, chap. 8.

Note 4, page 21, line 17.

Must drink the cup of trembling.

Thou hast drunken the dregs of the cup of trembling, and wrung them out.—Isaiah, chap. 51.

Note 5, page 22, line 10.

Come in the still small voice, and whisper—peace.

And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was

not in the wind : and after the wind an earthquake ; but the Lord was not in the earthquake : and after the earthquake a fire ; but the Lord was not in the fire : and after the fire a still small voice.—Kings, book i. chap. 19.

Note 6, page 31, line 11.

To set the sign of fire on every height.

And set up a sign of fire.—Jeremiah, chap. 6.

STANZAS

TO THE

MEMORY OF THE LATE KING.

“ Among many nations was there no King like him.”—*Nehemiah.*

“ Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this
day in Israel !” — *Samuel.*

STANZAS.

ANOTHER warning sound ! the funeral bell,
Startling the cities of the isle once more,
With measured tones of melancholy swell,
Strikes on th' awaken'd heart from shore to shore.
He, at whose coming monarchs sink to dust,
The chambers of our palaces hath trod,
And the long-suffering spirit of the just,
Pure from its ruins, hath return'd to God !
Yet may not England o'er her Father weep ;
Thoughts to her bosom crowd, too many, and too deep.

Vain voice of Reason, hush !—they yet must flow,
The unrestrain'd, involuntary tears ;
A thousand feelings sanctify the woe,
Roused by the glorious shades of vanish'd years.

Tell us no more 'tis not the time for grief,
Now that the exile of the soul is past,
And Death, blest messenger of Heaven's relief,
Hath borne the wanderer to his rest at last ;
For him, Eternity hath tenfold day,
We feel, we know, 'tis thus—yet Nature will have way.

What tho' amidst us, like a blasted oak,
Sadd'ning the scene where once it nobly reign'd,
A dread memorial of the lightning-stroke,
Stamp'd with its fiery record, he remain'd ;
Around that shatter'd tree still fondly clung
Th' undying tendrils of our love, which drew
Fresh nurture from its deep decay, and sprung
Luxuriant thence, to Glory's ruin true ;
hile England hung her trophies on the stem,
That desolately stood, unconscious e'en of THEM.

Of *them* unconscious ! Oh mysterious doom !
Who shall unfold the counsels of the skies ?
His was the voice which roused, as from the tomb,
The realm's high soul to loftiest energies !

His was the spirit, o'er the isles which threw
The mantle of its fortitude ; and wrought
In every bosom, powerful to renew
Each dying spark of pure and generous thought ;
The star of tempests ! beaming on the mast *,
The seaman's torch of Hope, 'midst perils deepening fast.

Then from th' unslumbering influence of his worth,
Strength, as of inspiration, fill'd the land ;
A young, but quenchless, flame went brightly forth,
Kindled by him—who saw it not expand !
Such was the will of Heaven,—the gifted seer,
Who with his God had communed, face to face,
And from the house of bondage, and of fear,
In faith victorious, led the chosen race ;
He, thro' the desert and the waste their guide,
Saw dimly from afar, the promised land—and died.


* The glittering meteor, like a star, which often appears about a ship during tempests, if seen upon the main-mast, is considered by the sailors as an omen of good weather.—See *Dampier's Voyages*.

O full of days and virtues ! on thy head
Centred the woes of many a bitter lot ;
Fathers have sorrow'd o'er their beauteous dead,
Eyes, quench'd in night, the sun-beam have forgot ;
Minds have striv'n buoyantly with evil years,
And sunk beneath their gathering weight at length ;
But Pain for thee had fill'd a cup of tears,
Where every anguish mingled all its strength ;
By thy lost child we saw thee weeping stand,
And shadows deep around fell from th' Eternal's hand.

Then came the noon of glory, which thy dreams,
Perchance of yore, had faintly prophesied ;
But what to *thee* the splendour of its beams ?
The ice-rock glows not midst the summer's pride !
Nations leap'd up to joy—as streams that burst,
At the warm touch of spring, their frozen chain,
And o'er the plains, whose verdure once they nursed,
Roll in exulting melody again ;
And bright o'er earth the long majestic line
Of England's triumphs swept, to rouse all hearts—but
thine.

Oh! what a dazzling vision, by the veil
That o'er thy spirit hung, was shut from thee,
When sceptred chieftains throng'd, with palms, to hail
The crowning isle, th' anointed of the sea!
Within thy palaces the lords of earth
Met to rejoice,—rich pageants glitter'd by,
And stately revels imaged, in their mirth,
The old magnificence of chivalry.
They reach'd not thee,—amidst them, yet alone,
Stillness and gloom begirt one dim and shadowy throne.

Yet was there mercy still—if joy no more
Within that blasted circle might intrude,
Earth had no grief whose footstep might pass o'er
The silent limits of its solitude!
If all unheard the bridal song awoke
Our hearts' full echoes, as it swell'd on high;
Alike unheard the sudden dirge, that broke
On the glad strain, with dread solemnity!
If the land's rose unheeded wore its bloom,
Alike unfelt the storm, that swept it to the tomb.



And she, who, tried thro' all the stormy past,
Severely, deeply proved, in many an hour,
Watch'd o'er thee, firm and faithful to the last,
Sustain'd, inspired, by strong affection's power ;
If to thy soul her voice no music bore,
If thy closed eye, and wandering spirit caught
No light from looks, that fondly would explore
Thy mien, for traces of responsive thought ;
Oh ! thou wert spared the pang that would have thrill'd
Thine inmost heart, when Death that anxious bosom still'd.

Thy loved ones fell around thee—manhood's prime,
Youth, with its glory, in its fulness, Age,
All, at the gates of their eternal clime
Lay down, and closed their mortal pilgrimage ;
The land wore ashes for its perish'd flowers,
The grave's imperial harvest. Thou, meanwhile,
Didst walk unconscious thro' thy royal towers,
The one that wept not in the tearful isle !
As a tired warrior, on his battle-plain,
Breathes deep in dreams amidst the mourners and the slain.

And who can tell what visions might be thine ?

The stream of thought, though broken, still was pure !
Still o'er that wave the stars of heaven might shine,

Where earthly image would no more endure !
Tho' many a step, of once-familiar sound,
Came as a stranger's o'er thy closing ear,
And voices breathed forgotten tones around,
Which that paternal heart once thrill'd to hear,
The mind hath senses of its own, and powers
To people boundless worlds, in its most wandering hours.

Nor might the phantoms to thy spirit known

Be dark or wild, creations of remorse ;
Unstain'd by thee, the blameless past had thrown
No fearful shadows o'er the future's course ;
For thee no cloud, from memory's dread abyss,
Might shape such forms as haunt the tyrant's eye ;
And closing up each avenue of bliss,
Murmur their summons, to " despair and die !"
No ! e'en tho' joy depart, tho' reason cease,
Still virtue's ruin'd home is redolent of peace.

They might be with thee still—the loved, the tried,
The fair, the lost—they might be with thee still !
More softly seen, in radiance purified
From each dim vapour of terrestrial ill ;
Long after earth received them, and the note
Of the last requiem o'er their dust was pour'd,
As passing sunbeams o'er thy soul might float
Those forms, from us withdrawn—to thee restored !
Spirits of holiness, in light reveal'd,
To commune with a mind whose source of tears was seal'd.

Came they with tidings from the worlds above,
Those viewless regions, where the weary rest ?
Sever'd from earth, estranged from mortal love,
Was thy mysterious converse with the blest ?
Or shone their visionary presence bright
With human beauty?—did their smiles renew
Those days of sacred and serene delight,
When fairest beings in thy pathway grew ?
Oh ! Heaven hath balm for every wound it makes,
Healing the broken heart ; it smites—but ne'er forsakes.

These may be phantasies—and this alone,
Of all we picture in our dreams, is sure ;
That rest, made perfect, is at length thine own,
Rest, in thy God immortally secure !
Enough for tranquil faith ; released from all
The woes that graved Heaven's lessons on thy brow,
No cloud to dim, no fetter to inthral,
Haply thine eye is on thy people now ;
Whose love around thee still its offerings shed,
Tho' vainly sweet as flowers, grief's tribute to the dead.

But if th' ascending, disembodied mind,
Borne, on the wings of Morning, to the skies,
May cast one glance of tenderness behind,
On scenes, once hallow'd by its mortal ties,
How much hast thou to gaze on ! all that lay
By the dark mantle of thy soul conceal'd,
The might, the majesty, the proud array
Of England's march o'er many a noble field,
All spread beneath thee, in a blaze of light,
Shine like some glorious land, view'd from an Alpine
height.

Away, presumptuous thought!—departed saint!

To thy freed vision what can earth display
Of pomp, of royalty, that is not faint,

Seen from the birth-place of celestial day?

Oh! pale and weak the sun's reflected rays,

E'en in their fervour of meridian heat,

To him, who in the sanctuary may gaze

On the bright cloud that fills the mercy-seat!

And thou may'st view, from thy divine abode,

The dust of empires flit, before a breath of God.

And yet we mourn thee! yes! thy place is void

Within our hearts—there veil'd thine image dwelt,

But cherish'd still; and o'er that tie destroy'd,

Tho' Faith rejoice, fond Nature still must melt.

Beneath the long-loved sceptre of thy sway,

Thousands were born, who now in dust repose,

And many a head, with years and sorrows grey,

Wore youth's bright tresses, when thy star arose;

And many a glorious mind, since that fair dawn,

Hath fill'd our sphere with light, now to its source
withdrawn.

Earthquakes have rock'd the nations :—things revered,
Th' ancestral fabrics of the world, went down
In ruins, from whose stones Ambition rear'd
His lonely pyramid of dread renown.
But when the fires, that long had slumber'd, pent
Deep in men's bosoms, with volcanic force,
Bursting their prison-house, each bulwark rent,
And swept each holy barrier from their course,
Firm and unmoved, amidst that lava-flood,
Still, by thine arm upheld, our ancient landmarks stood.

Be they eternal!—Be thy children found
Still, to their country's altars, true like thee!
And, while “ the name of Briton ” is a sound
Of rallying music to the brave and free,
With the high feelings, at the word which swell,
To make the breast a shrine for Freedom's flame,
Be mingled thoughts of him, who loved so well,
Who left so pure, its heritage of fame!
Let earth with trophies guard the conqueror's dust,
Heaven in our souls embalms the memory of the just.

All else shall pass away—the thrones of kings,
The very traces of their *tombs* depart ;
But number not with perishable things
The holy records Virtue leaves the heart,
Heir-looms from race to race !—and oh ! in days,
When, by the yet unborn, thy deeds are blest,
When our sons learn, “ as household words,” thy praise,
Still on thine offspring may thy spirit rest !
And many a name of that imperial line,
Father and patriot ! blend, in England’s songs, with thine !

THE END.

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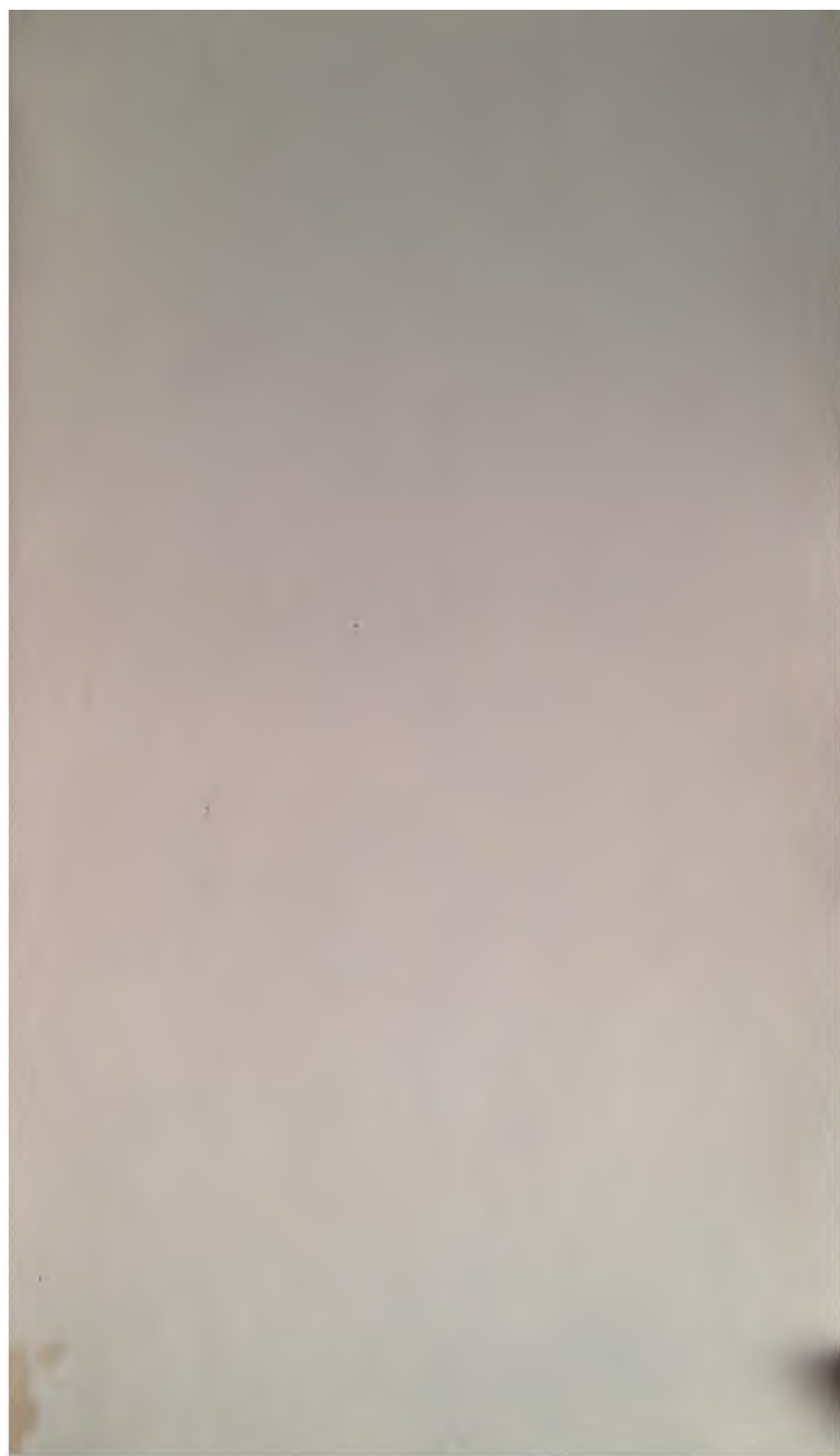
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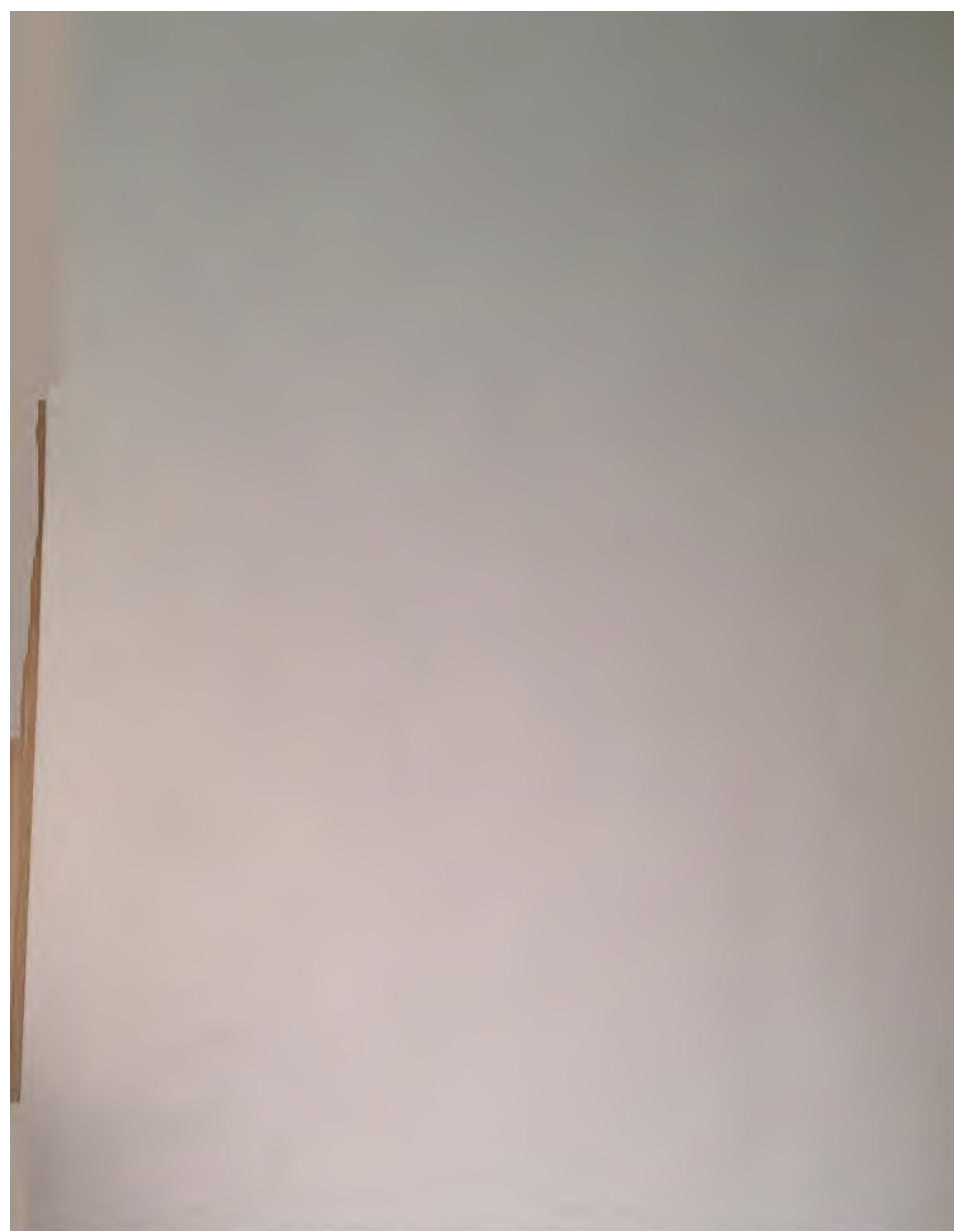
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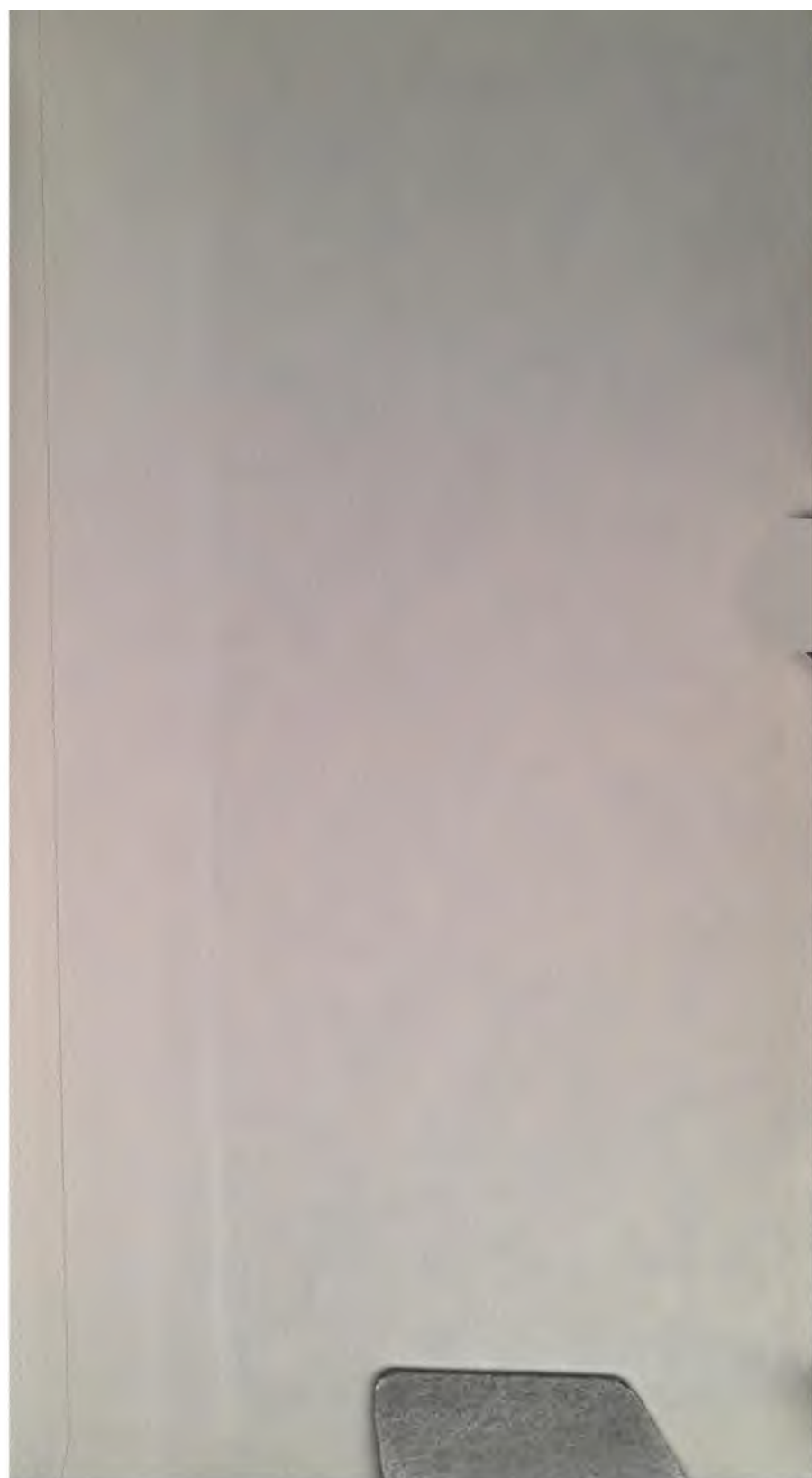
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